In the Claims:

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently amended) A device to actuate a drive gear of an adjustment mechanism of a seat with a stepped switching mechanism manually operable in two directions by means of a swiveling lever that is rotationally connected with said drive gear in order to rotate it, comprising:

a release mechanism providing a releasable rotational connection between said stepped switching mechanism and said drive gear such that when said release mechanism is activated, said drive gear is not in contact with any other gears and may rotate freely about a horizontal tilt axis.

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2. The device as in claim 1, wherein said stepped switching mechanism is rotationally connected with said drive gear via an intermediate gear, and wherein said intermediate gear may be displaced and thus disengaged from contact with said drive gear.

3. The device as in claim 1, wherein said swiveling lever includes a linkage device serving as said release mechanism and operable to release said rotational connection between said stepped switching mechanism and said drive gear.

4. The device as in claim 2, wherein said intermediate gear is mounted free to rotate about a fixed axis.

5. The device as in Claim 4, wherein said fixed axis coincides with said rotational axis of said swiveling lever.

6. The device as in claim 1, wherein said intermediate gear is mounted on a swing lever that is pre-tensioned by a spring urging said intermediate gear in engagement with said drive gear, and wherein said intermediate gear may be releasably coupled to said swiveling lever by means of said release mechanism.

7. (Currently amended) The device as in claim 1, wherein said drive gear is a part of a tilt adjustment mechanism for a seat

back, and wherein said seat back is pre-tensioned in a first ~~along the~~ direction ~~of travel~~ by a spring.

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8. (Withdrawn)

9. (New) An adjustment mechanism to rotate a seat back relative to a seat body about a horizontal tilt axis having a first position wherein said seat back may be rotated about said horizontal tilt axis and a second position wherein said seat back may rotate freely about said horizontal tilt axis, said adjustment mechanism comprising:

a swing lever rotatably secured about a rotation axis to said seat body;

a first gear rotatably disposed to said seat back;

a second gear rotatably disposed about said rotation axis;

a third gear rotatably disposed about said swing lever, said third gear in constant communication with said second gear;

a swivel lever in communication with second gear; and

an engagement mechanism operable between a first and a second position, whereby in said first position, said first, said second and said third gear are in communication with each other such that when said swivel lever is rotated in a first or a second direction, said seat back rotates in a first and a second direction respectively, and whereby in said second position, said engagement mechanism is in communication with said swivel lever such that when said swivel lever is rotated,

said third gear is not in communication with said first gear and said seat back is freely rotatable about said horizontal tilt axis.

10. (New) The adjustment mechanism as claimed in claim 9 wherein said engagement mechanism further comprises a linkage rod wherein said linkage rod engages said swing level such that when said swivel lever is rotated, said third gear is rotated and brought out of communication with said first gear.

11. (New) The adjustment mechanism as claimed in claim 10 wherein said swing level further includes an aperture sized and shaped to engage at least a portion of said linkage rod.

12. (New) The adjustment mechanism as claimed in claim 11 wherein said engagement mechanism further includes a button disposed on said swivel lever in communication with said linkage rod.

13. (New) The adjustment mechanism as claimed in claim 9 further including a biasing mechanism, said biasing mechanism

biasing said swivel lever in said first position.

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14. (New) A seat mechanism to rotate a seat back relative to a seat body about a horizontal tilt axis comprising:

a plurality of gears adapted to be in communication with each other;

a swivel lever in communication with at least one of said gears; and

an engagement mechanism in communication with said swivel lever such that when said swivel lever is rotated, at least one of said gears is not in communication with the other of said plurality of gears and whereby said seat back is freely rotatable about said horizontal tilt axis.

15. (New) The seat mechanism as claimed in claim 14 wherein said plurality of gears further includes:

a first gear rotatably disposed to said seat back;

a second gear rotatably disposed about said rotation axis;

a third gear rotatably disposed about said swing lever, said third gear in constant communication with said second gear; and

a swivel lever in communication with said second gear.

16. (New) The seat mechanism as claimed in claim 15 wherein said engagement mechanism further comprises a linkage rod wherein said linkage rod engages said swing level such that when said swivel lever is rotated, said third gear is not in communication with said first gear.

17. (New) The seat mechanism as claimed in claim 16 wherein said swing level further includes an aperture sized and shaped to engage at least a portion of said linkage rod.

18. (New) The adjustment mechanism as claimed in claim 17 wherein said engagement mechanism further includes a button disposed on said swivel lever in communication with said linkage rod.

19. (New) The adjustment mechanism as claimed in claim 17 further including a biasing mechanism, said biasing mechanism biasing said swivel lever in said first position.